

Social Gathering Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

With the recent reopening changes, what outdoor gatherings are permitted?

There is no longer a limit on outdoor social gatherings, beyond avoiding “large gatherings and crowded places.” Social distancing, wearing facial coverings, and hand hygiene are strongly recommended when people gather outdoors or indoors.

- Pools must remain at ≤50% capacity
- Sports gatherings may not open to the general public

Outdoor concerts, shows, festivals, parades and other outdoor events are allowed, with the same recommendations for social distancing, face coverings, and hand hygiene. Events requiring a permit would still require one and may or may not be approved depending on circumstances.

What rules apply to social gatherings or parties at private residences?

Social gatherings in private residences are not regulated and may be held. A gathering outdoors will naturally pose less risk than having guests indoors. **Strongly recommended:** limit numbers so that social distancing can be maintained, with attendees wearing face coverings when not eating or drinking. Practice hand hygiene and cough/sneeze hygiene. Make hand sanitizer readily available and have some clean masks available for anyone who has forgotten theirs.

If anyone in the household is sick, or in isolation for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 or because they were told they had exposure to COVID-19, they should not attend or hold a gathering.

Are live performances indoors able to resume?

Live performances can take place (for example for the purpose of streaming or broadcasting) but cannot be open to the general public. Concerts and shows can take place outside, with social distancing and facial coverings recommended.

May we attend our child’s sporting event?

Yes, family members but not the general public, may be spectators at youth sports gatherings and events.

May we attend our adult son's sporting event?

No, spectators and the general public are not allowed at adult sporting events, whether they are professional, semi-professional, amateur, or recreational. This is also true for high school and college sports activities.

What restrictions apply to weddings, funerals, receptions?

The restrictions will depend on where the event is held.

- Events held inside a **religious facility** must abide by occupancy restrictions to not exceed 50% maximum occupancy at any time. Social distancing and face coverings are strongly recommended.
- Events held at licensed food service establishments (including social clubs with dining facilities) must comply with restrictions found in the [Executive Order 20-06-10-01](#) and the [MDH Directive and Order Regarding Food Service Establishments](#) including
 - 50% occupancy indoors
 - no buffets (cafeteria style serving is allowed with applicable safeguards)
 - customers must be seated to be served
 - customers (except households or groups seated together) must be 6 feet away from each other, with no more than 6 people per table
 - staff are required to wear face coverings
 - customers over the age of nine are required to wear face coverings indoors except during the consumption of food and drink
- Events held at indoor recreational establishments, gaming facilities, or fitness centers must not exceed 50% maximum occupancy.
- All venues are strongly recommended to follow the most current guidance from CDC and MDH regarding social distancing, and avoidance of large gatherings and crowded places.
- Outdoor ceremonies and receptions do not have capacity restrictions unless they are held at a facility subject to them (e.g., outdoor pool at a hotel)

Where are facial coverings required, versus strongly recommended?

Facial coverings are required by order to be worn at:

- Retail establishments
- Food service establishments (both for staff and indoors for customers over the age of nine, except for customers while eating and drinking)
- Public transportation
- Personal services (beauty salons, barber shops, tattoo parlors, tanning salons, nail services etc.)

- Youth camps
 - Staff when interacting with other staff, parents, and campers, especially when social distancing is not possible
 - Campers age 9 and older when indoors, if can be worn safely and consistently
 - Staff should be alert for signs of heat injury and consider limiting use of facial coverings when outdoors on hot days
- Swimming pools (when possible outside of water, in addition to physical distancing)
- Sporting events (when possible; not recommended outside on very hot days due to risk of heat injury)

When not required, facial coverings remain highly recommended whenever possible, and particularly where social distancing is not possible.

My fitness center is requiring that staff wear masks when interacting with other employees or guests, and that customers/guests also wear face coverings, even when exercising, if able to do so safely. I am concerned that some patrons are not wearing them. Can they be made to wear a mask in an establishment that isn't covered by the Order?

Requiring masks as described is consistent with CDC recommendations and is among the [Best Practices](#) provided by the State of Maryland. The Executive Order states that any business, organization, establishment, or facility in Maryland may require its customers or visitors over the age of two, and/or staff to wear Face Coverings. An organization that elects to do so shall post signs at entrances advising of the requirement.

Enforcement of these requirements would fall to the business/organization management.

Our organization holds Bingo. What are the requirements? What if we wanted to provide food at the event?

Bingo alone would need to be at 50% capacity or less, as part of indoor recreation. No other requirements are in the Executive Order, but the Best Practices for Entertainment and Recreational Attractions should be considered which says "Require face coverings, when interacting with other employees or guests, particularly if social distancing cannot be assured."

The food component would add associated masking requirements, except when actively eating or drinking at the table, and social distancing (location of seating, and people must be seated to be eating with no more than 6 people per table) in addition to 50% capacity. No buffet style foods are allowed. There can be cafeteria style serving with dedicated servers, using dedicated utensils and other spacing and safety requirements. The food establishment requirement is in the MDH Secretary Directive for Food Service

Establishments <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/20.20.06.10.01%20-%20MDH%20Order%20-%20Food%20Service%20Establishments.pdf>

Sources:

[Executive Order 20-06-10-01](#)

[MDH Directive Regarding Food Service Establishments](#)

[MDH Amended Directive Regarding Community, Recreational, Leisure, Cultural and Sporting Gatherings and Events](#)

[MDH Amended Directive Regarding Youth Camp Programs](#)

[MDH Amended Directive Regarding Swimming Pools](#)

[MD Social Distancing FAQs](#)

[Best Practices Fitness Centers, Martial Arts, Dance Studios](#)

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